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*The Liberty of the Gospel explained,
and recommended.*

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the

Incorporated SOCIETY

FOR THE

**PROPAGATION of the GOSPEL
in Foreign Parts;**

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

IN THE

Parish Church of St. Mary-le-Bow,

On Friday the 15th of February, 1716.

By **THOMAS HAYLEY, A. M.**
Canon Residentiary of *Chichester*, and Chaplain in
Ordinary to His Majesty.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *Joseph Downing*, in *Bartholomew-Close* near
West-Smithfield, 1717.

February 15. 1716.

At the Anniversary Meeting of the Society.

ORder'd, That the Thanks of the Society be given to the Reverend Mr. *Hayley*, for his Sermon preached this Day before the Society ; And that he be desired to Print the same.

DAVID HUMPHREYS, *Secretary.*



GALATIANS V. Ver. 1.

*Stand fast therefore in the Liberty where-
with Christ hath made us free, and be
not intangled again with the Yoke of
Bondage.*



IN these Words, we read the great
End of the Gospel, and the gracious
Design of our Saviour's coming
into the World; which was, to pro- Isai. 61. 1.
claim Liberty to the Captives, and to
rescue Mankind from a State of *(spiritual)* Bondage.

And we read further in them, the great Care,
and Vigilance, and Fidelity, of the first Planters

of *Christianity*; how watchful they were, to guard the Disciples against all *unnecessary Impositions*, either upon their *Faith*, or *Prælice*; and how
 Acts 20. Industrious, to declare unto them all the *Counsel*
 27. of *God*.

A most useful and necessary Instruction arises from hence, to all such as are engag'd in Propagating the Gospel *Abroad*, and in Preaching of it at *Home*, and by which *both* of them ought to regulate their Conduct; Which is, to press nothing, as *necessary*, upon the Belief of Mankind, but what is *plainly* and *evidently Reveal'd*; to make the BIBLE, and the BIBLE ALONE, their great and constant Rule; and to discard all Fondness for any particular Sett of *Disputable Systematical Doctrines*. Then shall we truly follow *Apostolical Practice*, and be no Preachers of our selves, but of *Christ Jesus the Lord*, and shew our selves
 2 Cor. 4. 5. the *Servants of Mankind for Jesus sake*.

I hope therefore, I may, in some measure, answer the *Design* of our present *Solemnity*, and forward the *Great and Good Work* which this *Society* is engag'd in, if I take Occasion from the Text to lay before you, the *Nature* of that *Religion* which we are endeavouring to Propagate, and the *Duty* of those *Missionaries*, by whose pious and prudent Labours we hope to bring the
 Heathen

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Heathen into Christ's Inheritance, and the utmost parts Psa. 2. 8.
of the Earth into his Possession.

The Occasion of my Text, was an Attempt made by some *Judaizing Teachers*, in the Apostle's Daies, to impose *Circumcision*, as necessary to Salvation, upon the *Gentile Converts*. Thus we read, Acts 15. 1. That at *Antioch*, the Place where the *Disciples were first call'd Christians*, certain Men Acts 11. 26. came down from *Judea*, and taught the *Brethren*, and said, *Except ye be Circumcis'd after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be sav'd*. So prone are Mankind to run into *Arbitrary and Superstitious Observances in Religion!* And so careful ought the *Lovers of Truth*, and of *solid Virtue*, to be, to guard against them!

The Apostles set themselves every where, with great Industry, to oppose this Error, as having a Tendency to undermine *Christianity it self*. St. Paul, in particular, tells the *Galatians*, at the Verse immediately following my Text, *That if* Gal. 5. 2. *they were Circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing*. He lets them know, that the *Christian Religion* had exempted them, not only from that *Rite*, but from *all the other Ceremonial parts of the Jewish Law*; Insomuch that neither the *Gentile Converts* were oblig'd to take it upon them, nor the *Converted Jews* themselves any longer to observe it. He bids them therefore, *Stand fast in that Liberty* which the

the Gospel allow'd them, and not bring an Un-
 necessary Burden upon themselves, by putting such
 Acts 15. a Yoke upon their own Necks, as neither their Fathers,
 10. nor Themselves, were able to bear.

From my Text then, I shall beg leave to
 observe to you, the following Particulars.

I. The great Excellency of the Christian Religion, in that it has establish'd Mankind in Liberty, and free'd them from Bondage.

II. The Duty of the Preachers and Propagators of the Gospel, who should, after the Example of our Apostle, labour to preserve it in its primitive Purity; especially considering the many Corruptions of it, and Additions to it, which latter Ages have introduc'd. And lastly,

III. I shall take Notice of some particular Duties incumbent upon all Christians, which do necessarily result from a just Reflection upon the Whole. And shall conclude with an Application more peculiarly regarding our Selves of this Nation, as we have the Christian Religion in great Purity established among us, and as
 we

we are *Associated* to propagate it in the remotest parts of the yet *Unconverted World*.

I begin with the first.

- I. The great *Excellency* of the *Christian Religion*, in that it has establish'd Mankind in *Liberty*, and free'd them from *Bondage*.

The *World*, when our Lord Jesus Christ appear'd in the *Flesh*, was universally over-run with *Ignorance* and *Error*; *Vice* and *Wickedness* had invaded it on the one hand, and *Formality* and *Superstition* had possessed it on the other. The *Heathen* had not the *Knowledge of God's Law*, and the *Jews* had grossly corrupted it; But when the *Sun of Righteousness* arose, he was a *Light to lighten the* Luke 2. *Gentiles*, and the *Glory of God's People Israel*. 32. He came, not to destroy the *Law* or the *Prophecs*, Matt. 5. but to fulfil them; To explain to the *Gentiles*, 17. the just *Bounds* and *Obligations* of the *Natural Law*; and to shew the *Jews*, the *Emptiness* and *Insufficiency* of their *Ritual* and *Ceremonial Worship*; from all further *Observance* of which they were, by the publication of the *Gospel*, discharg'd.

Hence it is, that the *Gospel of Christ* is, by *St. James*, call'd, the perfect *Law of Liberty*. And *St. Paul*, James 1. writing to the *Romans*, tells them, that they had 25. not received the *Spirit of Bondage* again to *Fear*, Rom. 8. but 15.

but the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they were brought into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God ; He shews them, that there is no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus ; Because the Law of the Spirit of Life, hath made them free from the Law of Sin and Death. In other places of Scripture 'tis call'd Light ; And Believers are styl'd, Children of Light, and of the Day ; and are said to be call'd out of Darkneſs. All which is spoken in relation to that groſs Ignorance, and thoſe habitual Corruptions, in which the Gentiles were involv'd, before the Gospel Truths were revealed to them, whereby their Underſtandings were enlightned, and their Manners reſorm'd, and themſelves ſet at Liberty from the Power, as well as free'd from the Punishment of their Sins. Thus the Gospel gave Light to them that ſat in Darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of Death, and has guided our feet into the way of Peace.

And as to the State of the Jews before their Conversion to Chriſtianity ; Their Worſhip conſiſted in ſo many burdensome Rites, and ſuch a Number of ſuperficial and external Performances, that their Religion it ſelf was a kind of Slavery ; And the Precepts of it are call'd, Weak and Beggarly Elements, that gender'd to Bondage, under which the Obſervers of them were kept, and ſhut up, as it were, as Priſoners, till Faith came, and reſcued them

them from the *Law*, that *Schoolmaster*, which was Gal. 3. 24, 26, 29.
to bring them to *Christ*, who made them all *Children*
of God, and *Heirs* of *Salvation*.

Thus has the *Gospel* instructed us in the true
Nature, both of God, and of our *Duty*. That God is Jo: 4. 24.
a *Spirit*, and that they who worship him, must worship
him in *Spirit*, and in *Truth*; That no *Superficial* ex-
ternal Performances are, in *Themselves*, of any
Value in his sight; But, that 'tis the *Heart*, and
Affections, the inward Bent and Tendency of the
Mind, that He chiefly regards in all our *Services*.

When therefore the Soul of a Man is throughly
season'd with the true *Spirit* of the *Christian Reli-*
gion, his *Zeal* will not rest upon a bare *Modal Wor-*
ship, and carry him no further than the *Formalities*
of Religion; No! This will lift up his *Thoughts* to
the *Highest Heavens*, and make him contemplate
upon the *Infinite Perfections* of the *Great God*;
Whom he will look upon, as the *Eternal Source*
and *Original* of all *Being*, as the *Gracious Preser-*
ver of *Men* and *Angels*, and as the ultimate *Scope*
and *End* of all our *Actions*; Insomuch that he
will be able to use the *Psalmist's* *Expostulation*,
and truly say, with him, *Whom have I in Hea-* Psal. 73. 24.
ven but Thee, and there is none upon *Earth*, that I
desire in *Comparison* of *Thee*.

And to a like exalted Degree of *Brotherly Affe-*
ction towards *Each other*, the *Gospel Truths* would

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naturally

naturally lead us, did we but let them have their full Influence upon us. They would divest our Minds of all Narrow and confin'd Notions of Love, and Friendship, which tie down a Man's Regard and Concern to those only of his own Nation, or Country, or Kindred. We should from hence be instructed, that the Christian's Neighbourhood has no other Bounds set it, than the Confines of the Earth it self, that all Mankind are Brethren by Nature, and that all Christians are more strictly United by Grace; That, consequently, Compassion and Love are Debts, naturally due, to every one that carries about with him any share of our Creator's Image, as being Children of the same common Parent; And that the Highest degree of mutual Affection should knit together the Hearts of those, who are already spiritually United to Christ, as Members of his Mystical Body, the Church, and as having a joynt-Interest in the Merits of Him, their one common Redeemer.

Thus again, The Doctrines of Christianity, if duly attended to, would regulate and reform every thing that were amiss in the private Conduct of our own Lives; By giving us a just Dominion over our selves, and not suffering any unreasonable Passion to disquiet us, or Brutish Lust to enslave us. From hence we should learn, that to be immers'd in sensual Enjoyments, and to spend our whole

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whole time in the pursuit only of *Bodily Gratifications*, is but a poor *Employment* for a *Reasonable Being*; That it is the chief *Business* of the *Rational Life* to moderate and subdue the turbulent *Motions* of the *Sensitive Appetite*; That to live up to the strictest *Rules* of *Right Reason*, is to advance our selves to the *Height* and *Perfection* of *Humane Nature*; And that an *Entire Conquest* over all the irregular *Tendencies* of our *Stubborn Wills*, and *Vicious Affections*, is to make our selves truly free, Rom. 8: 37. and more than *Conquerors*.

Such as these are the *Thoughts* which the *Purity* of the *Christian Religion* would inspire us with; It would give us just apprehensions both of our *State* and *Obligations*, in whatever *Capacity* we consider'd our selves; Whether in relation to *God*, our *Neighbour*, or our selves. With respect to *God*, That we are *frail dependent Creatures*, the *Work* of his *Hands*; that we owe our very *Being* to his *Power*, our *Subsistence* to his *Providence*, and all our *Happiness* to his *Bounty*; And that consequently, all *Obedience*, and all *Acknowledgements*, must be due to *Him*, the *Source* and *Origin* of all; And we must glorify *God*, in our *Body*, and in our *Spirit*, which are *God's*, as the *Apostle* directs us. 1 Cor. 6. 20.

With respect to our *Neighbour*, That he is our *Brother*; that he is the *Servant*, and the *Subject*,

of God ; that he bears our *Creator's Image* ; And
 Rom. 14. that he is *one for whom Christ dy'd* ; And that, up-
 15. on all these accounts, therefore, he has a *Right*
 to our *Justice, Affection, and Respect*.

With *Regard to our selves*, that we are *Reason-
 able Beings*, that we have *Immortal Souls*, and that
 they are both capable of, and design'd for, very
 great *Degrees of Happiness* in a *future State* ; And
 that, therefore, it behoves us to *soar above* the
Objects of Sense, and to look beyond these poor
Earthly Enjoyments, lest we should forfeit the
Privileges of our High-Birth, dishonour our *Hea-
 venly Parentage*, and by making *Choice of these*
 2 Cor. 4. *temporal things*, as our *Portion*, finally *lose the things*
 18. *that are Eternal*.

These are the *free Principles* of the *Christian*
Religion, and are what our *Apostle* in another
 1 Cor 3. place calls, *Gold, Silver, and precious Stones*, built
 12, upon the *Foundation*, which is the *only Foundation*,
 11, *Jesus Christ* ; And they are such as will *abide the*
 14. *Fiery Tryal*, when the *Wood*, and the *Hay*, and the
Stubble, shall be *burnt up*. These, therefore, *St.*
Paul exhorts his *Galatians* to *adhere to*, and to
 direct their *Actions* by, and not to *relapse again*,
 either into the *Formal Ceremonious Observances*, of
 their *Jewish State*, or into the *gross Ignorance*,
 and *Corruptions*, and *Idolatries*, of their *Gentile one* ;
 But to take care, to keep themselves from com-
 ing

ing under the Yoke of the One, or into the Bondage of the other. Which brings me to the Second Particular I propos'd to consider, viz.

II. The Duty of the Preachers and Propagators of the Gospel, who should, after the Example of our Apostle, labour to preserve it in its primitive Purity; especially considering the many Corruptions of it, and Additions to it, which latter Ages have introduc'd.

The very Titles and Characters which are given to the Preachers of the Gospel, in the Books of the New Testament, do sufficiently intimate, and point out, their Duty to them. In that they are call'd the Ministers of Christ, and of God, 'tis signify'd, that they are not to be look'd upon as the Authors of our Salvation, but as Officers only, who may be Helpful and Subservient to it; And that, consequently, they are not of themselves to constitute and prescribe the Laws of the Christian Covenant, but to publish only, and declare them. And hence the Apostle to the Corinthians expostulates with them, *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollo, but Ministers by whom ye Believ'd, even as the Lord gave to every Man?* And he elsewhere tells them upon what Foundation he went, in the Correction of some Irregularities and Abuses, which they had run into, in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper; For, says he, *I have receiv'd of the Lord,*

1 Cor. 3;
5.
11. 23;

Lord, that which also I deliver'd unto you. Happy would it have been for the Christian Church, if every Successor of the Apostles, had neither claim'd any other Authority, nor preach'd any other Doctrine, than what had been receiv'd from the Lord, to be delivered to us! The grossest Idolatry could never then have crept into this Holy Ordinance, nor the grossest Superstition have defac'd the Purity of the Christian Worship.

² Cor. 5. ^{20.} Thus likewise, the Characters of being Ambassadors for Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of ¹ Cor. 4. ^{1.} God, which are given to the Ministers of the Gospel, do both intimate to them, That they ought to have a great regard to the Extent of their Commission, and to the Discharge of their Trust. For Ambassadors must regulate their Conduct, according to the Powers and Instructions they receive; And moreover it is requir'd in Stewards, that a Man be found Faithful, as the Apostle ver. 2. says.

Now the Ministers of the Gospel can never better answer these High Characters, or consult their own Dignity, than thus to keep within the Bounds of their Heavenly Commission, to preach the plain and Naked Truths of the Christian Religion, and to leave all Worldly and Political Disputes to the Persons conversant in them, and to whom they properly belong. Thus would they become
able

able Ministers of the New Testament ; They would ^{2 Cor. 3. 6.} by such a Conduct, render both their Persons Acceptable, and their Doctrines Powerful. The Authority of their Master, would then accompany the publication of his Laws ; Their speaking ^{1 Pet. 4. 11.} would be as the Oracles of God ; And it would be at the exceeding great Peril, and even the Loss of the Salvation, of all those who should contemptuously refuse to Hear, and to Obey. For we find this most solemn Sanction, given by our Saviour Himself, when he at first issu'd out his Commissions to the Preachers of the Gospel, Luk. 10. 16. *He that heareth you, heareth me ; and He that despiseth you, despiseth me ; And He that despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me.* And again, in another Place, he says, Go ye unto all the World, and preach ^{Mark 16. 15, 16.} the Gospel to every Creature ; *He that Believeth, and is Baptized, shall be sav'd ; And He that Believeth not, shall be Damned.*

A most dreadful Sentence this ! which our Lord has already pronounc'd against Infidelity ; And which he will hereafter Confirm, against all Unbelievers, who shall have been found obstinately to have rejected the Evidences of the Christian Religion ; At that Day, when he shall be ^{2 Thess. 1. 7, 8, 9.} revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, In flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not his Gospel ; Who shall be punish'd

punish'd with *Everlasting Destruction*, from the *Presence of the Lord*, and from the *Glory of his Power*.

And as there is this *severe Denunciation* against all those who *disregard the Ministers of the Gospel*, and *reject their Doctrine*, whilst they act within the *Bounds of their Commission* ; So likewise is there as *dreadful a Wo* pronounc'd against the *Ministers themselves*, if they *abuse the Powers* they are intrusted with, and *impose upon the Consciences* of their Hearers, by publishing their *own mistaken Opinions*, and *erroneous Decisions*, as the *true Doctrines of Christianity*, and then requiring Men to *Believe them*, as *strictly and explicitly*, as the *necessary Truths of the Gospel*, and with *Threats of the same Punishment* upon their *Refusal*.

But *Wise and understanding Christians* will not be thus frighten'd, out of their *Senses*, and out of the *Truth*, by such *Imaginary Thunderbolts* ; When they are sure they have the *Gospel* on their side, they need not be much concern'd at such *groundless Terrors*. For all the *Artillery of Human Anathema's* for the *Establishment of Error*, can do no *Execution* upon the *Professors of the Truth* ; They will, indeed, have a *fatal Effect*, when they are turn'd, as they shall be, upon the *Enemies of it* ; for they will draw down the *Divine Vengeance* upon their Heads. Our *Apostle* has already,

already, at the beginning of this Epistle, in a most solemn manner, pronounc'd their Doom; *Though* Gal. 1. 8. *We*, says he, *or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preach'd unto you, let him be Accurs'd.* And he repeats the Sentence, in the next Verse, to make it the more Awful; *As we said before, so say we now again, If any* ver. 9. *Man preach any other Gospel unto you, then that ye have receiv'd, let him be Accurs'd.* He speaks this with respect to those who would have impos'd Circumcision upon the Gentile Converts; But it stands with equal Force against the Addition of any other unnecessary Articles in Christianity; which is directly to alter the Terms of the Christian Covenant, and to be guilty of what the Apostle here calls, *the preaching of another Gospel.*

Now if Believers were so early perverted from the Simplicity of the Gospel, as that the Apostle could, even in his own Daies, complain of their Defection; and say, *I marvel, that ye are so soon* ver. 6. *remov'd from him that call'd you into the Grace of Christ, unto another Gospel;* It is the less to be wonder'd at, if in these Latter Ages there should appear occasion for a more Universal Complaint. And indeed, so numerous have been the Additions, and so gross the Corruptions, that have overspread the Face of the Christian Church, That, at the Time of the Reformation, to be Baptiz'd
C into,

into, what was then styl'd, the *Catholick Church*, was, strictly speaking, to be call'd unto another *Gospel*. And though it has pleas'd God, to enlighten the Understandings of some few Communities of Christians, who have Protested against these Corruptions, and profess the Gospel, as

Ep. 4.21. the Truth is in Jesus; Yet there are greater Numbers still involv'd in this dark State of Spiritual Bondage; and are under the Influence and Directions of such Guides, as have corrupted the whole Mass of Christianity, and have chang'd the Simplicity of the Gospel, and the plain Duties of the Christian Religion, into what is little better than Jewish Superstition, or Gentile Idolatry; Insomuch that they can neither Read the Scriptures, or Pray to God, or Receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as they ought, without either incurring the Censure of their Governours, or falling under the Displeasure of God. For the BIBLE, that Key of Knowledge, is taken from them; And Saints and Angels are become the

John. 17. Objects of their Prayers, instead of the One only true God, whom they ought to invoke,

3. through the alone Mediation of Jesus Christ;

1 Tim. 2. And the Cup is not only deny'd them, in the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, contrary to the Original Institution of it, but is made, together with the Bread then distributed, the Object of

5. Adora-

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Adoration; And thereby a plain Institution of Jesus Christ, is turn'd into a direct Act of *Idolatry*. Now, Beloved, *These things ought not so* James 3. 10. to be. And therefore I shall beg leave, to proceed to my *Third* general Head; under which I am to take Notice,

III. Of some particular Duties incumbent upon all Christians, which do necessarily result from a just Reflection upon the *Whole*. And,

(1). The first Thought that does naturally offer it self to us from what has been said, is *This*; That since the *Christian Institution* is of so excellent a Nature, and so highly conducing to the *Liberty* and *Happiness* of Mankind; It must doubtless be the indispensable Duty of all those who have been call'd to the *Knowledge* of it, and live under the Light and Influence of the *Gospel*, to do what in them lie's, to propagate the same throughout all the *World*; That *God's Way* may be known upon *Earth*, his saving Health Psal. 97. 2. among all Nations. This is what they owe to God, whose Will it is, That all Men should be Tim. 2. 4. saved, and come to the *Knowledge* of the Truth. 'Tis what they owe to our *Blessed Saviour*, whose *Honour* they are bound to advance, by endeavouring to increase his *Subjects*, and thereby enlarge his *Kingdom*. And 'tis what they owe, out of the strictest Obligations from

Love and Charity, to the *Souls of Men*, who,
 Acts 26. by this Means, may have *their Eyes open'd*, and
 18. *be turn'd from Darkneß to Light*, and from the
Power of Satan unto God; and thereby receive *For-*
giveness of Sins, and *Inheritance among them which*
are sanctify'd, by Faith that is in Christ.

(2.) *Another Consideration*, arising from a
 just Reflection upon what has been said, is this;
 That since there have been Attempts made,
 more or less, in all Ages of Christianity, by the
Perverseness and Superstition of such Men, whose
Zeal has run too fast for their Understandings, to
 corrupt the Simplicity of the *Gospel*; It must
 needs be a *Duty* highly incumbent upon every
Christian, who has any Regard to his own spi-
 ritual Liberty, or the Purity of Christ's Religi-
 on, to examine into the Foundations of his
own Faith and Practice, and see, whether or not
 they are agreeable to the *standing Truths* reveal'd
 in *Scripture*. Because, 'tis to *these* our Apostle
 direct's us, as the *Rule* by which we are to re-
 gulate our *Conduct*; and not to give up our
Understandings, to be led blindfold, by the Di-
 rections of *any Guides*, whose Pride and Vanity
 may declare themselves *Infallible*.

'Tis plain, that our Apostle, by bidding us
Stand fast in our Christian Liberty, does thereby
 empower us, to *judge of, and examine, the Doctrines*
 that

that are taught us; and even to *reject* them, when they appear to have *no Foundation* in the *Gospel*; Nay, tho' an *inspir'd Apostle*, or even an *Angel from Heaven*, should pretend to come commission'd to deliver them. And much more so, therefore, may we *judge of*, and *reject*, such pretended Doctrines of Christianity, as only the *common* and *ordinary* Pastors of the Church have introduc'd; And which are so *plainly contrary* to *Holy Scripture*, that nothing but the greatest *Ignorance*, and the grossest *Corruption*, could have establish'd them. Such are those *new Doctrines*, added to the ancient Creed, by a late Council, in a Neighbouring Church, Coun. of Trent. concerning *Purgatory*, *Transubstantiation*, the *Worship of Images*, the *Invocation of Saints*, the *Communion in one Kind*, and that *the Church of Rome is the Mother and Mistress of all Churches*, and that *there is no Salvation to be had out of her*, with several other *Points*, which have either *no Foundation in Scripture*, or are *directly contrary* to it; And yet are now requir'd to be *believ'd*, as of *equal Necessity* to *Salvation*, with the *Apostles Creed* it self.

But no Persons, or Church, upon Earth, Arch. Bp. Tillotson's Sermon. have any Authority to make *such Additions* as *these* to the Christian Faith; Or indeed to make any *Change* in the *Doctrine* of the *Gospel*, as
pub-

published by the *Apostles*, either by taking from it, or adding any Thing to it, as necessary to be Believ'd, or Practis'd, in Order to Salvation. And for any particular Christians to resign up their own Understandings and Judgments to the arbitrary Dictates of such imperious Guides, is to disobey the Commands of their great Lord and Master in Heaven, and to call another Man Master upon Earth, which is what we are expressly forbidden to do in the Gospel.

Matt. 23.
8.

(3.) Since it is the Design of the Christian Religion to enlighten the Understandings of Men, to free them from Ignorance and Superstition, and to establish in their Minds the Principles of Righteousness and true Holiness. It must be the Duty of every Professor of it, to lead a Life answerable to it; To adorn the Doctrine of God, Our Saviour, in all Things; To walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called; And to behave our selves as Children of the Light, and of the Day.

1 Thes. 5.
5.

2 Tim. 2.
19.

Let every one, therefore, who nameth the Name of Christ, depart from Iniquity. Let us subdue every unreasonable Lust, and irregular Passion in us, and cast off the Bondage of all Habitual Sin. Let us season our Minds with true and inward Piety, and have our Conversation in the World in Simplicity, and godly Sincerity. Then shall the Testimony of a good Conscience, be our present Re-

Tit. 2. 10.

Eph. 4. 1.

1 Thes. 5.

2 Tim. 2.

2 Cor. 1.

12.

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Rejoycing, and the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, Coloss. 1. 12.
our future Reward. Let us consider, that the
Light of the Gospel, by giving us a more clear
and distinct Knowledge of our Duty, has vast-
ly increased our Obligation to it; That we must
not now content our selves with a bare outward
and external Worship, but remember, That ex-
cept our Righteousness shall exceed the Righteous- Matt. 5. 20.
ness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no Case
enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus neither
Hypocrisie, nor Superstition, must be admitted in-
to the Christian's Breast. The true Israelite must
have no Guile. His Understanding must be regu- Jo. 1. 47.
lated by the naked Evidences of Truth, and his
Will, and his Affections, must readily obey it, by
doing justly, and loving Mercy, and walking humbly Micah 6. 8.
with his God. But lastly,

(4.) To apply what has been said more par-
ticularly to our selves of this Nation, both as we
have the Christian Religion in great Purity esta-
blish'd among us, and as we are engag'd in En-
deavours to propagate it, in the foreign unconvert-
ed Parts of the World.

As we are a Christian Nation, we have great
Reason to bless God for that Light of the Gospel
which we enjoy. He has, indeed, done great
Things for us, in establishing us in Liberty, and
freeing us from Bondage. For it pleased God to
call

call us of this Island very early to the Knowledge of the Gospel; and even again to enlighten us with Divine Truth, by restoring it to us in greater Purity than among any of our Neighbouring Nations, after it had lain, for many Ages, most grossly corrupted. And hereby he has put us under a double Obligation to stand fast for the future in our Christian Liberty, and to keep our selves from being any more intangled with the Yoke of Bondage.

And yet, so little sensible have we been of these great Mercies, and so very backward to answer the Obligations arising from them, that many of us have been but too ready, both to encourage, and to join in, a late desperate Attempt, which, had it not miscarry'd, must have rooted out the Protestant Religion from among us, as well as have overturn'd that happy Government we are under. And even now, it seems, tho' nothing has yet appear'd equal to the Wisdom of his Majesty's Councils, and the Strength and Power of his Armies, there is still so much of the same Popish Leaven remaining, as is likely to create a new Ferment in the Nation; and that gives but too much Encouragement to the Enemies of our Religion and Government, to hope for Success in the Attempts they are continually making for the Subversion of Both; and may possibly invite another Foreign Invasion, and thereby involve us again in War and Bloodshed.

And

Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. 25

And to help forward this hopeful Design, of destroying the Protestant Religion, there are lately at *Home*, of our own selves, a Set of Men Acts 20. 30. arisen, speaking perverse Things, to draw away Disciples after them; Who hope, by New Doctrines, to overturn Foundations, and to regain by the Pen, what they are not likely to compass by the Sword; For they would build a truly Schismatical, but by themselves absurdly call'd, A Catholick Church of England, upon such a Set of Principles, as are form'd on Purpose, to overthrow our whole Establishment by the late happy Revolution; And which, in their Consequences, would sap the Reformation also; And so bring us back again to our former Superstitions, and our old Anti-christian State.

But, better would it have been for us, not to 2 Pet. 2. 21. have known the Way of Righteousness, than after we have known it, thus to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto us. And therefore, since we have been call'd unto Liberty, let us stand fast Gal. 5. 13. in it; and not give Way to any slavish Doctrines. Our Apostle, with Relation to his Galatians, wishes, in this Chapter, That they were even cut ver. 12. off who troubled them. The least that we ought to do as Christians, is, to put a Guard upon our selves, that we be not perverted by them; To acquaint our selves with the true Nature of the

Jude v.3, Christian Religion, and to contend earnestly for the
 19. Faith, which was once deliver'd unto the Saints, that
 it may not be corrupted by those who Separate
 themselves.

There are laudable Attempts made, by many good Men, and Religious Societies, in this City, to correct this *Bad Humour* which has overspread the Nation, and has such a tendency to destroy, both our Religion, and Liberties. And if the early instructing of poor Children in the Principles of true Religion, the promoting Christian Knowledge among the more ignorant Grown Persons, and the Reformation of the Manners of the most openly Profligate, are likely means to Effect it, we have reason to hope we may see, in a short time, this happy Alteration. And a publick Acknowledgement of these publick Services, is the least that is due to those Worthy Persons, who have voluntarily engag'd in the Trouble, and Expence, of these Undertakings.

But to leave the State of Religion at Home. Let us cast our Thoughts upon what is the direct Aim and Business of our present Society, The Propagation of Christianity Abroad, among the Barbarous Nations in America, both in the Islands, and on the Continent. And here, truly, are the greatest Difficulties to be encounter'd, and such, as nothing, but the Indefatigable Industry of this Society, and

and a greater Number of Subscriptions, and larger Benefactions, and God's peculiar Blessing upon the Whole, can possibly surmount. I must beg leave, therefore, from this Place, to call upon all Orders and Degrees of Men amongst us, from the Highest to the Lowest, to joyn in the Advancement of this so Great, and so Good, a Work. And if they retain any grateful Sense of the Benefits which they themselves have received from the Gospel, it will spur them on, to a hearty Concurrence in this Noble Design, and to the affording their chearful, and bountiful Assistance, towards the supporting of the Measures which are taken for the Propagation of this Gospel in Foreign Parts; in such Parts of the World, as have not yet been enlighten'd by it, or are in danger of having this Light extinguish'd among them. Let us Reflect, That We our selves were sometimes Darkneß, tho' Eph. 5.8. now we are Light in the Lord; and that the Advantages which we have receiv'd from the Zeal of others, who labour'd our Conversion, ought to kindle our own, 'till the common Benefits of Christianity have reached the uttermost Corners of the Earth, and all Flesh have seen the Salvation of Luke 3. 6. God.

Let us remember, that the Gospel is call'd, Good Tydings of great Joy, and that its Benefits were design'd to be extended unto all People. And 2. 10. we

we cannot be heartily convinc'd of the *Truth*, nor perswaded of the *Excellency*, of the *Christian Religion*, nor be truly *Sensible* of the *vast Advantage* it is of, to the *Whole Race of Mankind*, unless we desire at the same time that the *Privileges* of it may be actually convey'd upon all ; We cannot pretend to be the *Children* of the *Kingdom of Christ*, without wishing to see it continually enlarg'd, and effectually endeavouring to *promote* it ; And it is part of the daily

Matt. 6.
10. Prayer he has taught us to make, That his *Kingdom* may come, which we cannot expect it will

Rom. 11.
25. do, 'till the *Fulness of the Gentiles* is come in.

May, therefore, the *Idols* of the *Heathen* speedily give place to the *Name of Christ*, in all *Parts of the Pagan World* ! And may the *Purity* of the *Gospel* shine *brighter and brighter* throughout every part of the *Church of Christ* already settled ! May it particularly be always publicly profess'd in its *Simplicity*, for our *Honour*, and our *Happiness*, in these *Kingdoms* ! And may there never be wanting a *Powerful Defender* of the *Christian Faith*, 'till all the *Kingdoms of this World*, are become the *Kingdoms of our Lord*, and of his *Christ*, when God himself shall *Reign for ever and ever*. Amen.

Rev. 11.
15.

F I N I S.